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Hart

THOUGHTS

ON

ETERNAL LIFE

A SERIES OF OCCASIONAL TRACTS.

BY

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NOTE.

THE following tracts were written and published at various times. They will be found to contain many repetitions and are not designed to be a consecutive treatise. Nor are they designed as an argument in proof of the view of Immortality therein stated. The purpose is to unfold, in as simple a way as possible, the true standing and relationships into which believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are brought by their union of life with Him.

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THOUGHTS ON ETERNAL LIFE.

I.

THE TWICE-BORN ONES.

"A man named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night." —*John iii*, 1, 2.

The Greek word here translated "ruler" is *"Archon,"* a title denoting authority and exalted rank. In other places this word is translated "Prince." In addition to this the Lord Jesus, during the interview from which the above sentence is quoted, addresses Nicodemus as a "Teacher in Israel."

By birthright he was a member of God's chosen and separated nation. By his upright and moral life in obedience to written law, he doubtless, like Saul of Tarsus and other zealous Jews, considered life eternal his just due. As a devout Hebrew, as Ruler, as Doctor of Divinity (for that is the modern equivalent of his title), he stands before us in the sacred page as a representative Israelite,—specimen from a nation which Omnipotent Wisdom had specially chosen from among all the peoples of the earth, and had educated, disciplined, and trained.

In the case of such an one, if in any, it should have been demonstrated that there is something in Human Nature of such value as to be worth preservation, and with capability of infinite development for good. The answer, however, of the lowly Galilean to the Doctor of Divinity is an absolute contradiction to any such supposition. It was annihilation to every thought which either Nicodemus or others could have had about himself. It was not merely that he had failed here and there, that there had been sins of commission or omission; but the judgment pronounced was concerning himself and his intrinsic fitness for eternal existence. It was not what he had done or left undone, but what he intrinsically *was* which condemned him, excluded him from, and rendered him incapable even of *discerning* the kingdom of God. The Lord classes him with the common rank of mankind in the words: "Except a man (any man) be born again—or from above—he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John iii, 3). "Except a man be born of water and of Spirit he cannot *see* the Kingdom of God" (John iii, 5). This testimony must not only have stripped Nicodemus of all self-value and pretension, but also of hope. It brought him down to the place where Divine Mercy always meets the helpless, hopeless, and worthless sinner, the place of utter poverty.

To this man, a moment ago so rich, but now so destitute, there came instant tidings of God's provision to meet his utmost need. This was not a means of cure for his "infected nature," nor to tell him what he might do in the way of reparation or amendment. God never patches up that which is defective, but brings in a *new* thing. And this new thing, which brings all the riches of Deity to meet the absolute destitution of the sinner—a thing not

mentioned or even hinted at in the prophetic writings—is Eternal Life. It could be nothing less, because nothing less would meet the sinner's need—it could not be more, because it includes all blessing which even Omnipotence has to bestow. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that *every one* believing in Him should not perish, but have *everlasting life*" (John iii, 14, 15).

Nicodemus would understand the figure. The Israelite, dying and virtually dead, saw lifted on high the very similitude of the curse which had killed him. The curse was *transferred*, and he became as one risen from the dead. So it is said concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, "He became a curse for us, as it is written, 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.'" One sight of Him who thus hung there, is the answer to every question as to personal guilt. Because He who hung there lives, the believer shall live also.

In the next chapter of this history we see the Lord in conversation with a personage quite the opposite of Nicodemus. The woman of Samaria was only a poor sinner, and by her own acknowledgment an immoral and dissolute person. She was already destitute and did not need to be brought down to poverty. Nicodemus stood in the place of righteousness and came seeking the Lord by night. The Lord went out into the place of open and manifest evil, to seek and save one who had never heard of Him, and unfolded to her, under the light of open day, deeper and higher truths than Nicodemus was prepared to receive. He made known to her the *gift* of God, received in the very asking of the Living Water, springing up into *everlasting life.*

Now the actual need of both these people was exactly the same, and the only thing that could meet that need was *Life.* Like Lazarus, lying dead in his grave, it was not a case for physicians, but for Resurrection.

That which God freely gives to the sinner, therefore, is *Life.*

It is an entirely new life, and not a renewal of the old, since it is only received by a new and heavenly birth.

It is a new *kind* of life, "That which is born of the flesh is *flesh,* and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii, 6).

It is a real and actual life, a positive entity, a principle of existence, and not a mere figure of speech. "As is the earthy, so are they that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, so are they also that are heavenly."

Those who possess this new principle of being are *Twice-Born* Ones, born first on earth and then from heaven. They are a New Race, unique in the Universe, one with Christ *now* in immortality, and by and by to be manifestly one with Him in Glory; and they must live forever, because, and *only* because they are one with Him.

Concerning this New Race, we hope to be able to speak on another occasion.

II.

THE MAN FROM HEAVEN.

"*The first man is (out) of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven.*"—I *Cor. xv*, 47.

We last spoke of a New Race or new order of beings in the universe, specially distinguished by the possession of Everlasting Life. As then stated, this is a *new* life, or different principle of being from anything before known or revealed; a *real* and potential entity, and not a mere figure of speech. We designated the possessors of this new and potential entity "*Twice-Born Ones*," because they were actually born, first, "out of flesh," and a second time "of spirit;" a first time on the earth, and a second time "from above," that is, from Heaven.

In this fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth there are revealed to us some of the blessed and glorious results of the Second Birth. In his reasoning on this subject, the Apostle draws a contrast between the first life and the second; and gives us some information about the source, character, and destiny of each.

Of course, Life, like everything else, must have an origin or source.

The seed of the apple, planted in the ground, takes up from the earth, air, and water the constituents of a new tree, and eventually reproduces its own kind. The seed of

the bird or the animal does the same thing, with a similar result. There is a created essence, which, under suitable conditions, repeats or reproduces the physical expression of itself. Neither in plants, animals, nor men is there a new creation at the birth of each individual of the species, but there is a new development from a primal origin or source of being.

So, also, Life is always *manifestive*. The invisible and intangible essence which resides in the seed of the apple, and which attracts and organizes the adjacent matter, always manifests itself as an apple tree, with the bark, leaves, fruit, etc., which belong to the apple and to it only. It is so also with the seed of animals, including Man. Like reproduces like, *because* "God hath given to every seed *its own body.*"

The Apostle uses this divine philosophy of Nature to illustrate the distinction between Two Men and the Two Races of which they are, respectively, the heads.

The first man is out of the Earth, Earthy. This is a statement concerning him as to his personal being. It does not mean that his body, merely, which is but the outer case and instrument of his personal self, was taken out of the ground, but that *he*, HIMSELF, with all his complex organism of soul and body, had his origin there. In the 139th Psalm, we have a fine and detailed description of the gestation of the first Adam in the lower parts of the Earth; the process being the prototype of that which has happened in the case of every child since born. We are never told that God made a mud effigy, and blew into its nostrils an emanation of His own Nature; neither are we told, nor is it true philosophy to suppose, that every birth of a child is accompanied by the new and divine creation

of a soul. The life which we see manifested is but the reproduction, under constantly varying conditions, of that upon which God looked when it was "fearfully and wonderfully made in the lower parts of the Earth."—Ps. cxxxix, 14–16.

The first man, therefore, as to his entire personal constitution, both psychical and physical, has his origin from the Earth. He is also *Earthy;* that is, his nature and characteristics correspond to his origin. Like all other Earthy things he is *mortal.* As the fiat has gone forth, "the SOUL that sinneth *it* shall die," he has become subject to death. Like all other things of Earth he decays, must see corruption, and, finally, become disintegrated, extinct, and return to the dust whence he was taken.

This is the plain and simple teaching of the Word of God, taking its language in its ordinary and obvious meaning. That other meanings have been foisted upon the language, and its plain sense thereby perverted, is a matter which we cannot take up now, though we hope to do so in a later tract.

Out of this first man all human beings have been developed, all are subject to a common doom; all being intrinsically perishable would die and perish, utterly and forever, were it not for the Divine revelation of Eternal Life.

This is a *new* thing. It is not remedial; it is radical. It is not the reformation of an erring race; it is the announcement of a New Race. It is not the reconstruction of a disordered and decayed order of things; it is a NEW CREATION.

What God announces, therefore, to meet the utter need of the sinner, is a SECOND MAN. As the first man stands as the head of a race which is only fit to perish, so the

Second Man is the head of a new order of beings fitted for and possessing Immortality.

The first man being out of the Earth, his descendants are, of necessity, Earthy ones. As the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven, the members of the New Race must be heavenly persons. We now begin to understand what is meant by being "born *from above*." Those thus born again are heavenly persons by birthright, inheritance, relationships, and destiny.

But, again, we are told that "the first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam (is) a quickening (life-giving) Spirit." The one is merely a possessor of an Earthy life; but the other is a Life-Giver. But, beyond this, there is a distinction, not merely in degree or quality, but in the *kind* of life *possessed* by the one, and *imparted* by the other. The one was made a living *Soul;* the other, an Uncreated One, is a Life-Giving SPIRIT. We may now begin to see what the Lord Jesus meant in telling Nicodemus that a man must be born of water (a symbol of *death*, well understood by the Jews) and of *Spirit*, in order to discern the Kingdom of God; and by His saying, "That which is born of Spirit *is* Spirit."

Theologians and scientists have no difficulty in distinguishing between the words "physical," or that which relates to the body, and "psychical," or that which belongs to the soul. But, when God brings in a new word to describe a new nature, super-added to body and soul, they confound it with the latter, and fail to make any distinction between Soul and Spirit, between the physical, or Earthy man; and the spiritual, or heavenly man. As we read in this chapter (I Cor. xv), "There is a psychical body, and there is a spiritual body."

As we shall try to show you later, this New Eternal Life which is in the believer is nothing less than the Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ, imparted to him. He has been "quickened together with Christ." He is, therefore, *one* with Him *now* in Life, as he shall, by and by, be one with Him, in manifested glory.

"Eternal life!—how will it bloom
In peerless beauty, when we rise
Triumphant o'er the vanquished tomb,
To meet our Saviour in the skies!"

III.

THE HEAVENLY FAMILY.

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John xii, 24.

The sinner who, like the Prodigal Son, has once *come to himself,* has come to the end of everything. He finds himself at once helpless, hopeless, worthless. When such an one is brought face to face with Jesus Christ, God's Son, as revealed in the Scriptures, he sees in Him that which fills up the utmost measure of his need. His personal fear is removed and his heart is at rest.

Too often, however, his religious teacher will tell him that he has now experienced a "change of heart," and, expecting that the old temptations will no longer have power over him, he is dismayed and distressed by finding that the old desires and appetites are still alive and active as ever, and quite as ready to respond to temptation. Were it not for something quite outside of himself, and entirely independent of his personal feelings and experience, he would give up in despair.

The truth is, he has *not* experienced what is ordinarily understood by a "change of heart." That is to say, his "infected nature" has not been "cured," nor has he been renovated, purified, or reorganized. He is, in himself

considered, just as bad as he ever was; and that is, just as bad, *intrinsically*, as he could possibly be. In him, that is, in his flesh, there still dwelleth no good thing.

God has done something better for him. What he needs to know is the fullness of the provision which He has made. This is not that he has been or ever will be "made over," but that he has actually been "born again." This means nothing less than the impartation of an actual and substantial *new life*. This life is known as *spirit*, in distinction from *soul*. It is immortal and incorruptible. It is a Divine Nature, of which he is now made partaker, in addition to the body and soul which he possessed as a descendant of Adam. Henceforth his life must be a conflict, because he has within himself two antagonistic natures, "flesh" and "spirit"—"and the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit." If intelligently instructed, he will learn to mortify (put to death) his members which are upon the earth. But most often he is taught to expect from his flesh that which it can never give, and drags along a most miserable and stunted existence till "some morning unaware" God reveals to him what he actually is, and what Christ is, not only *for* him, but *in* him.

At first this new life is but a germ, but it is indestructible and imperishable. By exercise, by conflict, by endurance, and, above all, by "looking to Jesus," and drawing sustenance from Him, "in whom dwells the whole fullness of the Godhead," it is to be developed and strengthened till it becomes dominant in the thoughts and acts of the believer. There will meanwhile be many a sore conflict, but victory is sure, because he is already "more than conqueror, through Him that loved him."

I am sorry to say that most of our modern Nicodemuses—Doctors of Divinity—smile at all this. It is too good to be true. They say with Nicodemus of old, "How *can* a man be born again?" They explain to you that conversion means such a "moral change" or revolution in your thoughts and feelings that you are born again "*as it were.*" "As it were" does very well as far as it goes, but it doesn't meet the urgent need of the burdened and crushed believer, who cries out, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

The Word of God teaches *actual regeneration.* A man is born into the world, because he has been generated. He is born a second time because he is *re*-generated. The one is as real and as truly a fact as the other. If, as Christians, we accept as a statement of actual fact, and rest the eternal safety of our souls on the words, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," we must also accept as literal truth the declarations "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Let us now look at some of the inspired words which tell us not only of the actuality of the New Birth, but which also reveal something of the origin, character, and destiny of the New Life.

See the first chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 12 and 13. To those who received the Incarnate Word He gave power (authority) to become sons (literally *children*) of God, "who were begotten not of (*ek*, out of, signifying origin or source) blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of *God.*" Here is a contrast between two real things—a human or fleshly birth, and a divine

birth. We learn that the New Life is from God, and that the "twice-born" are designated as children of God, not by adoption, but by birth. This statement is repeated and emphasized over and over again in the Christian Scriptures. Believers are called "children of God," "begotten of God," "born of God." According to the Vatican MS. 1 John iii, 1, should read, "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, *and we are!*"

The first lesson, therefore, that we learn concerning the Heavenly Family is, that its members are really born of God, and are children of God. Men talk ignorantly about the "Universal Fatherhood of God," but only he who has been born from above has any title to say "Our Father." To man, as man, God occupies the relation of Creator and Benefactor, but he is Father only to those who have been born from above.

Turn now to John v, 26, "For as the Father has life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself."

It is only God who can say, "I lift my hand to heaven and say I *live forever*" (Deut. xxvii, 40). Life in Himself—that is, innate, inherent immortality—belongs to God, and to God only. But here we find the Man from Heaven declaring that this has been bestowed by the Father upon Himself. He has just said, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth (makes to live) them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v, 21). A little later we hear the Lord Jesus addressing the Father, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."

We could quote a multitude of similar passages from John's Gospel alone. These, however, tell us plainly that

the New Life of the Heavenly Family is that Life in Himself, which the Father bestowed upon the Son, when down here as the self emptied one—feeble and dependent man—and imparted by Him to those whom the Father had given Him.

But how and when was it given to the Son of Man to have Life in Himself? We find an answer in the address of the Apostle Paul, in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the Second Psalm, 'Thou art my Son, *this day have I begotten thee.*'"

Among the titles of the Lord Jesus Christ are the "First-born from the dead," the "First-born among many brethren," and the "First-born of the whole creation." He went down into death, and in raising Him from the dead, the Father bestowed upon Him the gift of Life in Himself. The day of His resurrection was the day of His birth. Son from all eternity, and God over all, blessed forever, the Man Christ Jesus now takes anew the title of Son by reason of His victory over sin and death, and by receiving, as the sinless and victorious man, the gift of "life in Himself," to be imparted to the "many brethren," whom the Father had given Him.

All this will help us to understand the words of the Lord Himself with which we have headed this tract: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." These words were uttered by Him when He stood face to face with utter death—the doom of the sins which He had assumed as His own. He must die, that He might bring forth Life.

He was Himself the grain of wheat. Like produces like. God gives to every seed its own body. It is therefore the *Resurrection Life* of Jesus the Christ which is in the believer, by virtue of which he is truly a child of God, is "partaker of a Divine Nature" (II Pet. i, 4), is "begotten again from incorruptible seed" (I Pet. i, 23). The stalk which springs from the seed which died bears many grains, but they have a common life, derived from the seed which was planted, and they reproduce its characteristics. So the Eternal Life which is in the Christian is Christlike. It is to be developed now, and to be manifested in glory by and by.

We read in the Epistle to the Colossians (chap. ii, 13): "And you being dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened (made to live) together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

In Ephesians (i, 4): "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

In Romans (viii, 29): "For whom He did foreknow He did predestinate (mark out) to be conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

In I John (iii, 2): "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

From all the Scriptures herein quoted, we gather certain facts viz.:

1. The members of the Heavenly Family were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

2. They are the gift of the Father to the Son.

3. They have been forgiven all trespasses, *antecedent* to their being quickened; therefore, before any thought or wish of theirs on the subject.

4. They are possessors of Eternal Life, which is an impartation to them of the Resurrection Life of Jesus the Son of God, by virtue of which, and of which only, they will live forever. This is a *present* possession, potential now, designed to be dominant now, but sure to be supreme hereafter.

5. The possessors of this life are by and by to be manifestly like its Origin and Source. They are to be conformed to His image, and to be like Him, when they see Him as He is.

All this is as true of the humblest and weakest believer as of the most mature and strongest saint.

The One who came down from Heaven and became man, came alone, walked alone and bore alone the burden of our guilt. He is no longer alone, and never again, to all Eternity, will He be alone. But yet a little while and the word will be fulfilled: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." And again: "I will put my trust in Him." And again: "*Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.*"

IV.

THE RESURRECTION IN GLORY.

"*How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?*"—I *Cor.* xv, 35.

The same divine philosophy which has declared to us the presence of a new Eternal Life in the "Twice-Born Ones;" which has revealed to us in the "Man from Heaven" the source of that Life, and has shown us in the "Heavenly Family" something of its development and manifestation, supplies the answer to the above question.

Many of the Greeks, from among whom the Church at Corinth was gathered, belonged to that school of wise and self-sufficient people, now known as "materialists." They had some idea of the Atomic Theory, and knew something of the relations and properties of Force and Matter. When a dead body was put into the ground, they knew that its constituent elements would soon be dissipated, and recombined in other forms and other relations. It was, therefore, incredible to them that those whom they had seen die, and whose personal being, so far as they knew, was covered up in the ground, should ever stand up again —for that is the meaning of the Greek word "Anastasis," translated, Resurrection.

The Apostle meets them on the ground of facts which they recognized and accepted. In the first place, life con-

tinually springs out of death. The manifestive life of the plant is impossible, without the prior death of the seed. Secondly, the seed that is sown is not the body that is to be, but every seed has its peculiar and appropriate body. The grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies. The matter of which it is composed is dissipated and recombined in other forms and relations. But Paul points out to the materialistic Greeks that there is something in this seed which has the power of reproduction. A vital principle takes up and assimilates the material elements of a new being, which springs up in the earth in the vigor of manifested life. Were the grain of wheat merely matter, this were impossible; and this simple statement of a fact is a complete answer to all the materialistic theories which have been propounded from the Apostle's day to the present.

But, from the dead grain of wheat, that which is invariably reproduced is wheat—never anything else; from the acorn an oak, and never any other kind of tree. As an ultimate result, grains of wheat are multiplied from the buried seed; acorns from the buried acorn. The life which is manifested in the fruit is identical with that of the seed. So, also, with the seed of animals and men. "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (verse 39). That immaterial, vital principle which we call "soul," and which, as we saw in the "Twice-Born Ones," came out of the ground, assimilates and organizes matter into its own kind of flesh, and into the body designed for it of God.

Now, the Apostle in the next (40th) verse goes a step further, and reveals to us that as there are terrestrial or

earthly bodies, so, also, there are celestial or heavenly bodies. And in the 44th verse he tells us what kind of bodies these are. The earthly ones are psychical, or soulual (which our translators have rendered "natural") the heavenly one is spiritual. That is to say, the immaterial vital principle of being in the first is "soul" and in the second it is "spirit." Then, in verse 47 we learn that the first is "out of the earth, earthy," the second is "from heaven." The one is the "tent of our earthly dwelling," which is even now being taken down; the other is a "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. v, 1.)

The Apostle's answer to the questions, "How are the dead ('nekroi,' or sleepers,) raised up, and with what body do they come?" should now be clear to us. They are raised up because they possess a new life, which is immortal, indestructible, incorruptible. The body in which they will come is the manifestation of that new life, just as their earthly bodies are the expression and vehicle of their psychical life. The one is the product of a divine, the other of a human, seed.

The resurrection of the sleepers in Jesus is, therefore, not the standing up again of the body which has gone to corruption in the earth, or was burned at the stake and scattered by the winds of heaven. That body contains no germinal principle to cause it to live again. The soul which animated it—the real personal being of the believer—has "departed to be with Christ," and is to return with Him when He comes again. I Thess. iv, 14. That soul, in itself considered, is "corruptible." It came out of the earth, and, in the ordinary course of nature, would have returned thither. Left to itself, it would, as it came from

nothing, go back to nothing. As corruptible, it was, therefore, mortal, and was subject to decay, disintegration, and utter loss of personal identity. But as the Holy Spirit here tells us through the Apostle Paul: "This corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal with immortality" (verse 53). The soul, in itself mortal, corruptible, perishable, is to be inclosed, as it were, like a fly in amber, in a new, incorruptible and imperishable existence. There is to be no loss of personal identity, no such virtual annihilation as that of which Eastern sages speak, under the name of "Nirvana." But the believer will be eternally and manifestly identified with the Son of God, because he is "One with Christ." In another place (II Cor. v, 4), Paul tells us that he does not, though groaning under the burden of the earthly tent, desire to be "unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Paul has no desire to be an "unclad ghost"—a disembodied and naked soul. He knew that a body of some sort must be necessary for activity, enjoyment, and service. Therefore his hope was indissolubly linked in with Resurrection. He gives no countenance to the now prevalent idea that the souls of the departed are now, and anterior to their being clothed upon with their resurrection bodies, occupied with all the activities and delights of Heaven. On the contrary, he teaches us that the soul which departs to be with Christ is "asleep in Jesus." When it awakes to consciousness it will be "in His likeness." When, therefore, the tired and wayworn saint falls asleep, there is to him no appreciable interval between the closing of his eyes and his opening them again to look into the face of Him "Who loved him, and gave Himself for him." The interval may be a year,

or it may be ten thousand years. To him, however, it is nothing. He is meanwhile with Christ, as he was before "in Christ." He is in His keeping. He becomes unconscious one moment to sorrow and distress, to become, as far as his personal apprehension goes, conscious the next, in the Glory.

But, beloved Christian reader, I have not written all this so much to tell you what you will be by and by, as to try to let you know what you are now. No matter how weak and halting your walk may be, if you are only a Christ-truster, you have, as a present possession, Eternal Life. This is a new principle of being, an actual new life, the resurrection life of the Son of God, a Divine Nature imparted to you, by virtue of which you are now "one with Christ," and shall live forever, because He lives. This New Life is to be manifested in a glorious body, appropriate to its nature and conditions, and this is just what the Apostle defines as Resurrection. This Eternal Life is a real thing, as real as your soul or your body, and is distinct from both. You possess it now, and your Heavenly Father would have you walk in the power of it. To know who you are and what you are, is the first requisite to behaving yourself in correspondence with your station.

The Lord Jesus said concerning all believers in Him, that they shall "never die," "never see death," "never taste of death." There is that in the Christian which Death cannot touch. He may "fall asleep," and "depart to be with Christ," but this is not Death in any proper sense of the word. The corpse, the coffin, and the grave are but external circumstances, which in no wise touch the personal being, nor even the well-being of the believer. When, therefore, we speak of his death and resurrec-

tion, it is merely as an event in his eternal life, in which he has sloughed off the body of sin, and enters upon the manifestation and development of his real and true life.

The time of this manifestation will be when Jesus comes again. The corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, came up again by virtue of the inherent life bestowed upon it by God the Father. He was the "first fruits"—the earnest and evidence of the harvest to be gathered. But the order as stated is, "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at His coming." "When Christ, our Life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him, in Glory." (Col. iii, 4.)

The character of this manifestation will be that each believer will be just like Jesus Christ. "Beloved, it is not yet manifested what we shall be, but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John iv, 2). "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate (mark out, or outline), to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii, 29.) "For our citizenship is in the heavens, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform our body of humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body, according to the energy whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. iii, 20, 21.)

We are, therefore, waiting, not for death nor for the joys of heaven, nor to meet our departed friends, but for the manifestation of Eternal Life. To him who knows that the very next thing of any great importance that can happen to him, is that he is to stand face to face with the

Son of God, to be transformed into His likeness, the things of earth seem small indeed. To live in the "power of an endless life," and in the strength of a "sure and certain hope," is to be buoyed above trial, and victorious over temptation.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory; O Death! where is thy sting? O Hell! where is thy victory?'"

"*Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!*"

V.

"IN CHRIST JESUS."

"If any man be in Christ Jesus—A NEW CREATION."—II *Cor v*, 17.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." —*Rom. viii*, 1.

These three words are used many times by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Churches. They are the expression of a reality—the statement of a fact as true and actual as any fact in our physical existence.

The entire human race was created in Adam. The first man, as we have already seen, is stated in Psalm cxxxix, to have been developed in the lower parts of the earth, from a germ or life principle, created by God. For this germ was created a body fearfully and wonderfully made, and when brought out into the light, God breathed into it the breath of lives, and it became a living soul. From this living soul and this living body were developed the soul and body of Eve, and from this pair all human life has since been developed. There has been no new creation of a soul or body since that time. Hence the whole human race is constantly spoken of in Scripture as being "in Adam."

When the pair sinned, the fountain of life was poisoned. Their descendants inherited the moral disorder, and that change of centre from God to self, which is some-

times spoken of by theologians as "original sin." Consequently the doom of death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Sins are but the outward manifestation of an innate condition. It is not the commission of sin which has constituted us sinners, but we sin because, intrinsically, by birth and inheritance, we are sinners.

Now, God's remedy for this condition is radical. It does not consist merely in making provision for the forgiveness of sins, or by providing means by which men can be saved, if they choose to accept the offers of salvation. If this were all, the depraved nature would still remain, and the forgiven sinner would still be under the dominion of sin. The disordered moral being is incapable of any development by training, discipline, or education in the direction of holiness. The heart remains in irreconcilable enmity to God, and must so continue to remain.

Our Lord, in his interview with Nicodemus, announced the depths of human needs in the words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see (or discern) the Kingdom of God." (John iii, 3.) "And except a man be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii, 5–6.) This was not the announcement of the necessity of reformation, or even of total reconstruction. It was nothing less than the absolute setting aside of that which existed, and the bringing in of something absolutely different and absolutely new. The flesh, that is to say, the old nature derived from Adam, can never do anything more than reproduce itself. However civilized, educated, refined, and polished—however changed in appearance—it must remain intrinsically the

same. That which is born of the flesh must be flesh, and cannot be anything more. But with the declaration of this need comes also the announcement of God's provision to meet it. This is nothing less than a new creation —a creation not like the old, from beneath; not derived from the earth, but from above. In order to participation in the kingdom about to be revealed, man must become the possessor of a new life—an actual vital principle, distinct from and superadded to the life which he derived from Adam. This life has its source from above—as the marginal rendering of the passage has it,—"Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John iii, 3.) While a real and actual thing, it is neither a physical birth nor a psychical life. The one so born is born *of Spirit.* Of such, it is said that they are "begotten not of blood; nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i, 13.) Life is derived from Adam by *propagation*, but the new and heavenly life is received by *impartation.* The one is successional, the other eternal.

This seed truth, stated by the Lord himself to Nicodemus, is largely developed and amplified in the Epistles, especially in those of the Apostle Paul. We read in the epistle to the Colossians, "And you being dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He hath quickened together with Him, having freely forgiven all our trespasses." (Colos. ii, 13.) We see here that forgiveness is antecedent to the impartation of life. This was done without the sinner's consciousness or knowledge, and was effected when Christ bore on the cross the burden of our sins, and having there made an end of them forever, entered by His own blood into the holiest of all, having

obtained eternal redemption. A man thus made the object of grace, becomes, at the moment appointed of God from all eternity, the subject of grace. He is quickened—that is, made alive in union with Jesus Christ, the risen one—who said to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv, 19), who declared to the Pharisees concerning His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish;" (John x, 28), who said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die;" (John x, 26), "shall never see death;" (John x, 51), "shall never taste of death;" (John x, 52), who prayed the Father, concerning His chosen ones, "that they all might be one, even as we are one, I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." (John xvii, 21–23.)

Those who are thus quickened, are partakers of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. They are, as the Word states over and over again, "one with Him." He is in them. They constitute one body, of which He is the head. His life permeates the whole body, and energizes each and every one of its members. It is therefore said, concerning all believers, that they are "in Christ Jesus." They were, and according to the flesh still are, "in Adam," but the old standing and the old relationships are superseded by the new. In Adam they died. In Christ all are made alive. In Adam there is nothing but condemnation, and death reigns, because sin dominates the race; but in Christ Jesus we are told that there is now no condemnation. In Christ Jesus condemnation is not possible, because the believer is identified with Christ, who bore the burden of sin and made an end of it forever. The Christian is viewed as having died and risen with Him, and having therefore left upon the other side of His cross and grave

all that belongs to his old nature, so that God views him only in Christ Jesus, one with Him now in actual life, as by and by he will be in glory. So we read in the second epistle to the Corinthians, "If any man be in Christ—a new creation. The old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new, and all things are of God." (II Cor. v, 17, 18.) The old things—that is to say, the moral nature which we derived from Adam, still exists, but God counts it as having been brought to an end in the cross of Christ. He would therefore have us reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto righteousness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Rom. vii, 40.) We are taught to mortify, that is, to put to death, our members which are upon the earth; (Col. iii, 5)—to walk, not according to flesh, but according to Spirit (Rom. viii, 4), which is the distinguishing characteristic of those who are in Christ Jesus.

It follows, therefore, that those who are said to be in Christ Jesus have been brought out of one condition and one set of relationships, into a new condition, with entirely new relationships. This is the key-note of all the ethics of Christianity, as taught in the New Testament. Our duties and responsibilities spring from our relationships.

The believer was in the first place, chosen in Him, from before the foundation of the world, that he should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. i, 4.) This can, of course, be only the sovereign act of God, according, as it is said, to the "purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord." The purpose is effectual. The act is complete in itself. It is entirely independent of human volition. The believer having been chosen in the eternal purpose of God, and registered in the Lamb's Book of

Life, is brought into the position of standing in the love of God, and being holy and blameless before Him. This is not in consequence of any one's purpose or action, having its origin in himself; the whole action is external to himself. It is God who chooses him, and God who acquits him of blame, because, sinner as he is, God has taken him up, and put him into Christ Jesus.

We also read that God has "accepted him in the beloved." (Eph. i, 6.) Literally it is "graced in the beloved." That is, God has put upon the sinner all the grace and loveliness that He sees in His own Son. He stands complete in Him. That which God sees and counts is not the old nature derived from Adam, but He beholds the believer only as identified with His Son, and one with Him in the possession of conferred immortality.

It follows, according to the statement of the Apostle Paul in Romans viii, 1, that "there is therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." They are brought into a place and standing where condemnation, or even the imputation of sin, is impossible. It is not merely that the question of sins has been met in the cross, but the question of sin itself has been met in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are justified in His death. We are saved by His life. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. v, 10.) The personal guilt of the sinner for sins actually committed in thought, word, or deed, was fully met in the cross, and these sins were there made an end of forever, and drowned in the ocean of God's forgetfulness, so that they can never come to light, or be remembered any more. This is reconciliation.

The living and ascended Saviour bestows upon the believer a new life; an actually new principle of being in the power of which he is to walk. This new life is nothing less than the communicable resurrection life of God's Son, by virtue of which the believer becomes a partaker of a Divine nature, whereby he shall escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is thus that having been reconciled he is saved by the life of Christ. It is not merely that Christ lives to be a Saviour and Advocate for him, but he is saved by His life, because it is the life of Christ Himself, which is in him, and which has become an indissoluble portion of his personal being. He has now two natures—the old and the new—the flesh and the spirit —and these lust against each other, so that we might not do the things that we would. It is the new nature which God contemplates. The workings of the old, if allowed, constitute trespass to be confessed and forgiven; but the old nature is set aside. It is counted as dead and done with. It cannot form the basis of an accusation against the believer. When he understands this, and apprehends what his true standing is in Christ Jesus, he will have power to put the flesh under his feet, and to walk according to what he really is—a child of God by divine generation—a citizen of heaven by birthright—a member of the body of "the Christ" by the actual impartation of the life which permeates that body.

And so also the believer is declared to be exalted in Christ and to be seated in the heavenlies in Him. He is not yet there in person, but he belongs there. That is his birthplace and his destiny. His inheritance is there. His life is there hid with Christ in God. As a king traveling outside his own dominions, is still spoken of as occupying

the throne of his own country, so we who are down here in the place of humiliation and trial, are reckoned of God as seated in Christ in the heavenlies.

This is but a little of the wondrous meaning which is contained in the three words which head this essay. We shall endeavor, as we go on, to still further unfold this meaning.

VI.

"CHOSEN IN CHRIST."

"According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless in His sight."—Eph. i, 4.

In nearly all the religious teaching of modern times, the divine plan concerning the Church and the world is represented as merely remedial. Much elaborate and learned discussion has taken place concerning the origin of evil. We are taught by many theologians that while its origin is inscrutable, evil is a positive fact, which once did not exist, but must now exist eternally; which God could not have originated, but which nevertheless, and contrary to His will, has entered a once sinless universe. In all schools of theology God is practically represented as endeavoring to remedy the effects of that, the existence of which He was unable to prevent. The gift of the Son of God and His death upon the cross are presented to us as expedients. By some we are taught that evil will endure eternally, but will be made the occasion of displaying God's justice in the endless torture of countless millions of His creatures, and thus of enhancing the happiness of the saved.

There are others who teach more mercifully, though not more truly, that by suffering in a future state all souls will eventually become purified and fitted for Heaven; so that

in some remote cycle of eternity evil will disappear and everybody will be happy at last.

Neither of these theories have any foundation in Holy Scripture. Both have their origin in the false and pernicious doctrine of the inherent immortality of the human soul; a doctrine first enunciated by Plato; adopted in the third century by the corrupt body which called itself the Holy Catholic Church, and carried into the creeds of the various protesting sects which split off from that church at the Reformation. The Scriptures of Truth have been bent and twisted in every way to accommodate them to this doctrine. It is this which has made it necessary to teach the eternity of evil and suffering, and which represents the infinitely wise God as seeking to patch up, at inestimable expense, a universe which had somehow gone wrong. It has also put man in the place of God, giving to the creature as an inherent and inalienable possession that which the Creator claims as His possession and solely His gift, and substituting human choice and human will for the divine choice and will.

If God be omnipotent, it must be that He could have prevented the existence of evil had He so chosen. If He be all-wise and infinitely benevolent it must be that evil is permitted to exist, because by its temporary presence in the universe the greatest blessing will be secured.

This is the plain and simple teaching of God's Word. Throughout the entire revelation is seen the thread of a golden purpose—a purpose which antedates every revealed fact and which culminates in a universe "reheaded up in the Christ" (Eph. i, 10), in which all things, both on the earth and in the heavens are reconciled unto Him, "having made peace by the blood of His cross"

(Col. i, 20); in which "God will be all in all" (I Cor. xv, 28), and in which "death will be no more, neither mourning nor crying, neither will there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. xxi, 4.)

This purpose is "in Christ Jesus." It begins in Him, and its full fruition and glorious development are all to be in Him. It was in Him "before the foundation of the world." It is being carried out in the way of gradual development through a series of ages. We are told of it and of its object in the following verses from the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which the Apostle Paul announces the special mission to which he had been called—

"To me, the very lowest of all saints, was this grace "given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings, "the untraceable riches of the Christ; even to enlighten "all as to the economy of the secret which has been con- "cealed from the ages by God who created all things, in "order that now may be made known to the Governments "and the Authorities in the Heavenlies, the manifold "Wisdom of God according to a *Plan of the Ages*, which "He constituted in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii, 8–11.)

The foregoing is a literal rendering of the original, which gives no warrant for the words in the A. V.— "Eternal purpose which He purposed."

We learn in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i, 2), that God *constituted the ages* on account of a Son whom He appointed heir of all things; also (xi, 3) "In Faith we perceive that the ages have been adjusted by the Word of God in order that out of things not appearing have come to pass those that are seen."

We thus learn of a divine plan being carried on through

a series of ages or epochs constituted and adjusted of God with reference to the fulfillment of His designs. Nothing is left to chance, contingency, or human option.

The object of this plan is that God may teach His creatures about Himself, or rather may disclose Himself to them. These learners are the inhabitants of "other worlds than ours,"—beings of might and intelligence far beyond our puny conceptions. They are Governments, Authorities, Potentates, and Lordships (Eph. i, 21). God would reveal to them, so to speak, the depths of His character. In the ages to come He is to "exhibit the surpassing wealth of His grace by kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii, 7), and is even now displaying to Principalities and Powers in the Heavenlies His multifarious wisdom by means of the Church.

The Teacher, therefore, is God, the learners are the heavenly intelligences who people the millions of worlds which roll in space, the lesson is the infinite perfections of Deity, and the means by which this wondrous object lesson is imparted is the Church. It will readily be seen that the motive underlying this stupendous Plan of the Ages is very far above that of merely providing a remedy for sin and its consequences; of repairing a breach made by Satan, or even the restoration of a fallen and helpless race. Were there no sin and no sinners, there were no occasion for such a display of Infinite Love and Wisdom. The sin and the sinner are the occasion, but not the ultimate object of this display.

But who and what is the Church? It is described in the Epistle, from which we have been quoting, as "His body, the fullness (or *completeness*) of Him who is filling all things with all." (Eph. i, 23.) We have seen in pre-

vious numbers of these "Thoughts" the *real* union of Christ and the Christian—a union which consists in the possession of an actual vital principle common to the Head and the members; the communicable resurrection life of Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead, saying to Him, "Thou art my Son, THIS DAY have I begotten Thee." (Acts xiii, 32, 33.) The members have, in themselves, no value, but they stand like ciphers to express to a wondering universe the value of the Head. Moreover, they are informed and permeated with life from the Head—*Eternal* life—as a present and eternal possession. They are really and truly one with Christ. God has so identified them with His Son, that He reckons His death as their death, and unites them to Him by "quickening them together with Him" (Eph. ii, 5), *i. e.*, by imparting to them His resurrection life.

In raising Jesus from the dead, God first bestowed immortality *upon a man*. The Son of Man was the self-emptied One (Phil. ii, 7), who lived and walked by faith only, hung upon the cross in the exercise of faith, and went down into death in the power of simple trust. One exercise of His divine power would have defeated the object that, *by man*, should come the resurrection from the dead. To this trusting and obedient Man it was then given "to have *life in Himself*, even as the Father hath life in Himself." (John v, 26.) But not for Himself only. He was given authority over all flesh, "so that He might give Eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." (John xvii, 2.)

Was then the gathering out of the world of the constituents of this Body, ordained as the exponent of God's eternal purpose, left in anywise to chance or circumstance,

or made even remotely dependent upon man's choice, or upon human effort or persuasion?

The announcement with which the Apostle Paul opens his letter to the Ephesians is as follows: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, ACCORDING AS HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we might be holy and blameless in His sight, having in love foreordained us unto Sonship through Jesus Christ unto Himself *according to the good pleasure of His will.*"

The action here spoken of is that of God. The source of the action is in the will alone, without assigned cause or reason, of Him who is Sovereign and Supreme. The action is complete in itself, and is anterior to creation; therefore, independent of all secondary causes. It is God who *has* blessed, not who may or will, bless us with all spiritual blessings. The Christian has been endowed with these blessings, and they have been made his as truly as though he were now as able to enter into them as he will be by and by. They are his by an inalienable deed of gift. The blessings are spiritual; therefore, they pertain to his new life. They are heavenly; and, therefore, belong to him as one "born from above." And they are "in Christ." The believer is also "in Christ," now and eternally.

But in order to the bestowal of a gift there must be recipients. These, we are told, He *chose in Christ* before the foundation of the world. For such a choice there could be no reason in those who were chosen. It was the absolute, inscrutable act of Omnipotent Authority. You may call it arbitrary, if you will, but God has the right to

be arbitrary. He saw from all eternity the complete, corporate Christ—the Head and the members—which, throughout the ages, was to be the expression to the universe of His own mind. For this body He chose in the counsels of eternity, each member, from the greatest to the feeblest, and assigned to each his own place in the Body. The feeblest, as well as the greatest, is requisite and necessary to the completion of the Body, and to the full expression of the thought of God.

But the recipients must not only have been chosen, they must be endowed with fitness to receive. Their guilt and enmity must be taken out of the way, and they rendered "holy and blameless in His sight." This was accomplished at the Cross, where every question of sin concerning the chosen ones was fully and forever met, and was certified in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

In the place to which they have now been brought there is "no condemnation." The law of the New Creation is, that "their trespasses are not imputed unto them" (II Cor. v, 19). While the believer's flesh is with him and he is in a corrupt world, there will be trespass to be confessed and forgiven, and defilement to be cleansed by the ever available blood. But "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii, 33).

But even this is not all. The chosen one, made holy and blameless in the sight of the Infinite Purity, must have capacity to receive and apprehend, before he can enjoy the spiritual and heavenly blessings with which he is endowed. The loveliest landscape has no attraction to a blind eye; the sweetest music no charm to a deaf ear. God bestows not merely the seeing eye and the hearing ear, but He gives the *life*, of which the eye and the ear are

but the ministers. "In love," we are told, "He has foreordained us to Sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ." It is a *real* sonship. Neither the word nor the thought of "adoption" have any place in the original, either here or in Romans viii. We are *born*, not adopted sons. We are sons, because we are one in life with the risen Son of God. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be, but we know that when He is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I John iii, 2.)

Thus chosen, redeemed, born of God and divinely endowed, the believer has become a heavenly person. He is declared to be "exalted with Christ, and seated in the heavenlies in Him." (Eph. ii, 6.) In other words, he is now a native of heaven. His citizenship is there,—(Phil. iii, 20),—his home and his inheritance are there. The same divine fiat which brought him into the place where he now stands, separated him from the world, and made him in verity a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth.

The careful reader of Holy Scripture will readily recall numerous declarations of the sovereignty of God. The Lord Jesus declares "As the Father raised up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth WHOM HE WILL." (John v, 21.) "No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." (John vi, 44.) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," (*Ibid.* v, 37.) "My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all." (John x, 29.) "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (John xv, 16.) "Christians are called according to purpose." (Rom. viii, 28.) "They are the elect of God, holy and beloved." (Col. iii, 12.) They are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." (I Peter ii, 9.)

There is nothing said about human free agency. The Scriptures make no attempt to reconcile Divine Sovereignty and human freedom. In fact man is *not* a free agent. He is described in Scripture as "dead in trespasses and in sins." (Eph. ii, 2.) Now—given a certain character and certain motives, a certain result *must* ensue. Because man's character is intrinsically bad, it responds to bad motives. It may see and approve the good, but pursues the evil. God does not now appeal to man by motives, for the last appeal was exhausted when the world rejected His Son. He does not cure the bad character, but He bestows a new nature. Man has desire—external motives appeal to that desire—and purpose and action result. But there is in man no such thing as a self-determining will, which is an attribute of God alone. If not self-determining, it must be determined by external influences. It cannot therefore be said to be free. In fact, the phrase "Freedom of the Will" as applied to man is no more than arrant nonsense. The believer is indeed free—a freed man in Christ Jesus. But his freedom is like that of the bird, which merely carries out the law of its being, and even of him it is said: "The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, so that we might not do the things that we would." (Gal. v, 17.) Conscious freedom is the realized ability to carry out our own desires. The desires of the "new man in Christ" are in exact accord with the will of God. Therefore, to do, and to be able to do, just what he wishes to do, is just what God would have him do, and herein is the sense of absolute freedom.

To one who has trusted his soul to Jesus Christ, and who rests upon the word: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but shall have eternal life," the thought

of God's absolute Sovereignty is most precious. It is neither blind fatalism, nor the cold decree of arbitrary Power. It is the sovereignty by which infinite Love, combined with infinite Wisdom, is carrying out a Purpose designed for the higher blessing of the whole Creation. For the fulfillment of this Purpose, the believer has been made a necessary constituent—as necessary, it may be reverently said, to God, as salvation is to himself. If salvation were in any sense dependent upon any thought or act of mine, I could never feel absolutely certain that my thought or act were acceptable—that I had believed or repented aright. But when I know that my faith, though itself nothing, stands on the absolute and irrevocable decree of omnipotent righteousness, I am at rest. It is not the consciousness of what *I* think about God that gives me conscious peace—it is the knowledge of what He has declared that *He* thinks about *me*.

This truth, also, though most violently opposed by human self-will, should be full of hope and comfort to a poor sinner. It is just poor sinners that God needs to carry out this glorious Purpose. He has no use for those who are righteous in themselves, and they also have no need of Him. But if one knows himself a sinner, he knows that he is just the kind of material that God chooses to build up the body of The Christ. Nay, more, if he knows himself a sinner, it can only be because God has taught him so. The proclamation "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that EVERY ONE believing on Him, might not perish, but have eternal life," comes to him as a special message. Such as he, Christ Jesus came into the world to save. He is authorized and invited to trust his soul to Him; and to know of a surety

that the love which finds expression in Him, was upon him from everlasting, and will keep him to everlasting.

God is daily quickening into union with Christ the chosen constituents of His Body. Jesus meanwhile waits, seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. At any moment the number of the elect may be completed, and then shall those who remain be caught up to meet Him in the air, with all those, who, since He ascended, have fallen asleep in Him.

AND SO SHALL WE BE EVER WITH THE LORD. *Amen.*

VII.

JUSTIFIED, RECONCILED, SAVED,

in His blood. by His death. in His life.

"For while we were yet helpless, Christ at a set time died on behalf of the impious. For scarcely on behalf of a just person will any one die; though possibly on behalf of the good, some one might even dare to die. But God commends His love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having been justified in His blood, we shall, through Him, be saved from wrath. For if, being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved in His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."—Romans v, 6–11.

In the above passage, the expression of God's love is shown in contrast with the ways and thoughts of men. It begins with the statement that while we were helpless (for the words "without strength," scarcely express the thought) Christ, in due time, died for the *ungodly*. This word would have been well translated, "impious." The statement conveys the greatest possible contrast between Him who died, and those on whose behalf He died. The One has been already shown in this epistle, as declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. The others are helpless ones, impious ones. Now among men, few could be found who would die on behalf of a righteous—that is to say, merely a just man; though on behalf of a good—that is, a benevolent and philanthropic man, some one might even dare to die.

This, then, is the basis on which the love of God is revealed to us. There was neither capability nor attractiveness in us, but God comes to us, *commending* His love to us, on the ground that while we were helpless, while we were impious—in a word, while we were yet *sinners*, with all that that name implies, Christ died for us. From this great fact, thus broadly stated, a number of consequences are seen successively to arise. In the first place, we are said to be "justified in His blood." The word here translated "justified" means to make righteous or "right." We who are sinners have become by this act done on our behalf, that which God can look upon with satisfaction and in which His scrutiny detects no fault, and against which no accusation can be made, because He is able to pronounce us "right." We are, it is said, justified in or by His blood. The type of this transaction is seen in the description in the book of Leviticus, of the great day of atonement. The victim having been slain at the great brazen altar and there consumed, the high priest, clothed in a pure white robe, takes in a vessel some of the blood of the victim, passes into the interior of the tabernacle, into its innermost recess, called the "Holy of Holies," where the shekinah or visible manifestation of God's own presence rested on the ark of the covenant and beneath the meeting wings of the cherubim. Here the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and about the holy place—thus bringing before God the evidence of the accomplishment of the sacrifice which had been made without. The priest having accomplished this, retired from the Divine Presence, divested himself of his white robe and put on again his robes of glory and beauty. Then, coming out in the view of the people, he bestowed upon them a bene-

diction. The tabernacle in the wilderness, the priest, the altar, the ark, the holy place, were, we are told, "but figures of the true." (Heb. ix, 24.) They were but shadows of realities which exist in the heavens. So Christ, when He had offered Himself to bear the sins of many, entered, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood, into the true holy place—appearing in the immediate presence of God for us. He had accomplished the work which His Father gave Him to do. He had made an end of sins forever, having blotted them out and obliterated them as though they had never been. Hence the statement now before us that we have now been justified or made righteous in His blood. An inevitable consequence follows, as here stated in the ninth verse. That is, we shall be saved from wrath. The wrath of God—that is to say, the adverse aspect of His holiness against sin—had already descended upon the head of the Victim and had been exhausted there, so that no penalty has been left for the sinners on whose behalf He died.

But this is not all. The sinner has not only been made right in God's sight, by the blood of Christ, but he has been brought into a new relationship. He was before, according to the statement in verse 10, an enemy of God. He has now been reconciled by the death of His Son. It is, therefore, not merely that he has been cleared of guilt and freed from condemnation; but the thought of reconciliation implies the idea of unity, of community of thought and feeling; of being, in a word, brought into a tender and loving relationship, in which the bestowment of blessing on the one hand, and the return of thanksgiving on the other, are the natural and proper characteristics. Coupled with this fact, comes the statement of a higher,

deeper, broader salvation than mere deliverance from wrath. Having been justified in His blood, we are to be saved from wrath. This is a great and wonderful thing; but it is only the negative side of the great salvation which God has provided;—we are not only saved *from* something, we are saved *to* something. Being now reconciled ones, we are saved "IN HIS LIFE." We have not now to do with a dead Christ. We are not taught to contemplate Him as being now on the cross; nor to go to the cross at all to find Him, there to weep at His feet, or to worship Him as dying. He says, concerning Himself, "Fear not. I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, but behold I live forever, and I have the keys of death and of hell." (Rev. i, 17, 18.) It is, therefore, with a living Saviour that we have to do. The Saviour who has delivered us from wrath by His blood, who has reconciled us to God by His death, has passed through the heavens, and now lives, seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He declared to His disciples, and declares to us: "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv, 19.) "He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." (John x, 26.) "Though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John xi, 26.) We are saved *by* His life. He is a present Saviour—able, willing, ready to deliver us from every trial and temptation. He is present, and the remembrance of His sacrifice is ever present, on our behalf, before God. This assures us of our eternal safety. It is God's answer to every question of doubt or fear in our minds. It is the eternal evidence in the sight of God and the universe, that all question of sin has been forever settled for us, and that God has made and declared a peace, which never can be disturbed. But even all this does not

include what is meant by the expression "saved *in* His life." It would be, after all, but a poor boon to be delivered from the punishment of sin; if thus saved, we should still remain intrinsically sinners. Saved in His life, we are saved not merely from the punishment of sin, but from sin itself. We are delivered not merely from condemnation, but from that which has been condemned and set aside by the cross of Christ. That is to say—ourselves. Our old nature, all that which was at enmity to God, is reckoned of Him, as having there been brought to an end and set aside; and we, having thus died with Christ, are seen in the Divine estimate as having also risen with Him. We are partakers of a new life—a new principle of being—even the communicable resurrection life of the man Christ Jesus, on whom God bestowed the gift of innate, inherent immortality, in raising Him from the dead. No other being in the universe—no angel—possesses this, except the Son of God, and those to whom He has imparted it. It is incorruptible, impeccable, and is eternal, because it is divine. The believer is therefore saved in His life, because Christ's life *is* his life; because God, having first forgiven him all trespasses, has made him alive together with Christ.

All this has been accomplished *for* the Christian. The justification and the reconciliation were effected when Christ died on the cross. They were entirely independent of the sinner's volition, and were in no sense whatever conditional upon anything that he could do or think. All was external to him. His quickening, accomplished at a moment designed of God from all eternity, is the impartation of a new life, which was first manifested in the sight of the universe, when Jesus rose from the dead, and

which was first imparted to men, when the Risen One, at His first meeting with His disciples, breathed upon them, and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

The knowledge of these facts brings great joy to the one who is concerned in them, and to whose knowledge they have been brought. He rejoices in the first place in the facts as they concern himself. One who has been delivered from death naturally rejoices at first in the fact of his deliverance. When, however, his deliverance comes to be apprehended and realized, his thoughts turn to the deliverer Himself. In the case of a Christian, his joy leads him into acquaintance with the character and thoughts of God his Father. The result is that his rejoicing is no longer concentrated upon himself, or upon facts which immediately concern himself; but as he becomes acquainted with God, self becomes set aside and forgotten, and his joy is in God Himself for what He is in Himself. Hence the apostle says: "And not only so," not only that having been sinners, we are justified and saved from wrath, having been enemies, we are reconciled and saved in His life, but we joy *in Him* to whom we are thus brought, into whose face we look, and in whose arms we are held. In thus rejoicing in Him, the apostle states in brief the great central fact of redemption: "We joy in God, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v, 11). Why our translators should have translated the same word as "reconciliation" in one verse, and as "atonement" in the next, it is hard to understand. The word is one of great force and significance. Turning to the book of Genesis, and the description of the building of the ark, we read that Noah, in accordance with the instructions of God, "pitched it within and without with pitch." The seventy

wise men of Alexandria, when they made a translation of the Scriptures of Israel into the Greek language, employed as the exact equivalent of the word "pitch," the same word which is here translated "reconciliation." The connection may not at first be obvious, but it is nevertheless very significant, and should give to our thoughts a new and grander conception of what God means by atonement or reconciliation. Outside the ark, as it floated upon the heaving waters, there was nothing but death. Into the ark, after Noah and his family had entered, God entered and shut the door. Within, therefore, was God, and was life, while without, death reigned. The pitch or bitumen, which filled the seams of the ark, and was smeared both on the exterior and interior of its hull, was that which constituted the separation between the death without and the life within. The ark was a well-defined type of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God entered into the ark, and abode with the eight saved persons who were there shut in with Him, so did He in common with those whom He saved, commit Himself and the upholding of His universe to Christ hanging upon the cross. The believer is said to be "in Christ Jesus." Of God, it is said that he "was in Christ Jesus, reconciling a world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (II Cor. v, 19.) So reconciliation, according to God, means that we have been brought into immediate nearness to Him, in His Son—as the Lord prayed for His disciples, and for those who were to believe in Him, through their work, "that all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in them, that they also may be one in us." Thus God and the saved sinner are shut up together in the ark Jesus Christ. This is reconciliation. "Nothing can separate us from the love

of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Rom. viii, 39.) Our "life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our Life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory." (I Col. iii, 3, 4.)

These are simple statements of facts which God has accomplished and which He reveals to us. Though they are so grand and wonderful, as to be beyond our comprehension, they are nevertheless designed to be received and rested on with the simplicity of faith. Faith is that which takes God at His word, and which believes a thing simply and only because He has said it. The power of Christian life, the ability to surmount circumstances, and to be victorious over trial and temptation, are in our apprehension of the facts which God has revealed.

VIII.

EXALTED IN CHRIST.

"But God, being rich in mercy, on account of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us to live together with Christ; and exalted us together and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, in order that He might exhibit in the ages to come the surpassing wealth of His grace by His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."—Eph. ii, 4–7.

Looking up at the starry heavens, we behold a countless multitude of shining bodies moving through space. Nearly all of them are suns, like the one which shines upon us; and, like it, are the centres of systems of worlds which revolve around them. Of these suns or centres, astronomers have so far estimated about one hundred millions as within the field of telescopic vision. Of the number of worlds which circle about them, we can form no estimate. Among the worlds which compose the system of which our own sun is the centre, the Earth, on which we live, is one of the smallest; and the system itself is but an insignificant member of the heavenly host.

It would be contrary to analogy not to suppose that many of these worlds are the abodes of intelligent beings. Some of them, it is true, appear to be still in a nebulous or formative condition, while others, like our own moon, seem to be dead worlds. But, doubtless, many, if not

most of them, are peopled by creatures of various degrees in the scale of being.

The Scriptures give confirmation to this view. The Psalmist exclaims, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm viii, 3.) This comparison is not with reference to merely material things. Man, as compared with the material universe, the solar system, the earth, or even some single natural object upon it, is physically insignificant. But one soul may outweigh in value the whole physical universe. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi, 26.) The soul of the humblest believer, chosen in Christ, justified, reconciled, saved, is an indispensable constituent of "The Body of Christ." As such, it is of as much more value than the whole material universe, as it will endure longer than it. That is to be destroyed, but the believer is to live forever. "The Heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved." (II Peter iii, 12.) "And I saw a great white Throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, *and there was found no place for them.*" (Rev. xx, 11.) "They shall perish, but thou remainest." (Heb. ii, 11.) "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xix, 19.)

The question of the Psalmist, therefore, involves a comparison, not of matter, but of mind. It implies, not merely that the universe, commonly spoken of in Scripture as the Heavens, is inhabited, but also that Man is among the most insignificant of its inhabitants.

There are many other Scriptural statements which confirm this.

In Ephesians iii, 10, we are told of Governments and Authorities in the heavenlies. In Ephesians vi, 12, we find in the original Greek, "Governments, Authorities, World-rulers, spiritual things of wickedness *in the heavenlies.*"

There are, therefore, in the heavenly regions, both good and bad beings, under constituted authority. If there are Governments, there must be those who are governed; if Authorities,—those who are under authority. Of some of these beings, it is said that they are "rulers of worlds." It would seem probable that whole systems of worlds may be provinces under the government of beings who in might and wisdom far surpass the ordinary human conception of Deity itself. So we read that Jesus has been exalted "far above every government and authority and power and dominion." (Eph. ii, 4.) Also, "by Him were created all things—*those in the heavens, and those on the earth;* the visible and the invisible; whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities."

The term "the Heavens," is frequently used in Scripture to include the entire universe. Thus, the Lord taught His disciples to pray to "Our Father who art in the Heavens." Not in a certain distant locality called heaven, but filling all space, and consequently, immediately near to the supplicant, wherever he may be. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. i, 1.) "Heaven" is often mentioned, in the singular number, as the special abode of God and of holy angels. But the plural term, "the Heavens," is used in a wider and all-inclusive sense. The translators of King James's Bible seem to have overlooked this distinction; which, however, will be very manifest by reference to the "Englishman's Greek Concordance," under the heading "*ouranos.*"

Another term of wide significance, several times employed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is "The Heavenlies" —translated in our common version as "heavenly places." It refers not only to the worlds which compose the universe, but includes as well the space in which they revolve. It is the scene of the activities of mighty beings both good and evil;—as the Apostle Paul writes, "Our conflict is not with flesh and blood, but with the Governments, with the Authorities, with the World-rulers of this darkness, with the *spiritual things of wickedness in the heavenlies.*" (Eph. vi, 12.)

We have thus presented to our thought a scene of inconceivable vastness, with mighty populations, various ranks and orders, empires, dominions, princes—angels and archangels (that is to say prince-angels);—and among these innumerable hosts, the conflict between Good and Evil is raging, and is nearing its final result. To all this, the redemption wrought out by the Son of God upon this little Earth is to have eternal relations,—as we read, "To bring together under one head, in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." (Eph. i, 10;) —and "through Him to reconcile all things unto Him, having made peace by the blood of His Cross, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens." (Col. i, 20.)

At the head of this vast scale of being stood the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God, who was in the bosom of the Father. That He might settle forever every question of sin and righteousness, and make known to the universe the wisdom and love of God, He who occupied the highest, descended to the very lowest place. We are told, "Let this mind be in you, which was

also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking on Himself the form of a servant (*doulos*—literally, a bondsman) and being found in condition as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." (Phil. ii, 5–8.) He divested Himself; He laid aside every particle of dignity and glory, and identified Himself with a race which was at an infinite moral distance from God by reason of sin. Because of sin, death reigned, and this self-emptied One bowed Himself in obedience to the sinner's doom. He went to a felon's death, and bore upon the Cross God's righteous judgment of the sins which He assumed as His own. "In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His devotion." (Heb. vi, 7.)

"He made an end of those sins forever." (Heb. x, 12.)

The result of all this is declared in the remainder of the passage from Philippians, above quoted. "Wherefore also God hath supremely exalted Him, and granted to Him the name which is above every name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in the heavenlies, and those on the earth, and the subterranean ones, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii, 9–11.)

It is the man Christ Jesus who is thus exalted. It is not merely that He is "highly exalted," as our common version has it; but the word means *supreme* exaltation. This is confirmed elsewhere,—"Having raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above every government and authority and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this

age, but in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet." (Eph. i, 20–21.) So the One who became Man, and, as man, went down into death, has been exalted *as man*, above all created powers and dignities. It is in a human name that every knee shall bend. So we are told of Him as our Great High Priest, "who has passed through the heavens," not merely "into heaven," as our English Bibles have it, but He has passed *through* them,—that is to say, having gone down into the very lowest place, He has now passed to the highest. He is now "exalted above the heavens" (Heb. vii, 26), and is "seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Heb. viii, 1.) In Ephesians also, we read, "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." (Eph. iv, 9–10.)

It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Those for whose salvation He descended from His eternal glory were at an immense moral distance from God. There were those who stood in a position of nominal nearness. The nation of Israel had been chosen out of the world, and been made the subjects of Divine training, discipline, and law. The result of all this was to demonstrate the utter distance of their moral nature from the requirements of the Divine Holiness. The Gentile, on the other hand, had, so to speak, no status whatever. Left to himself, and permitted to walk in his own way, he perished in his own corruption. It was to this place that the Lord Jesus descended, and took part in the nature of those so utterly helpless and hopeless. To Him, in the councils of eternity,

the Father had given certain members of this worthless and corrupt race. For these, whom He called His sheep, He laid down His life, as He declared to His disciples, "I lay down my life for the sheep," and, "My Father gave them me." (Jno. x.)

Now we are told that those who were thus nominally near, and those who were confessedly far off, have been made into one body, the middle wall of partition having been broken down, and both have been reconciled in one body to God through the cross. Those who were afar off, as well as those who were nominally near, have been brought nigh to God in the blood of Christ. This it is which has taken out of the way everything which prevented access, has removed every element of distance, and has brought the believer into immediate nearness and to the privilege of unhindered intercourse with the Holy God.

In God's great plan of redemption, those who have thus been chosen, given, redeemed and brought nigh, are seen to be identified in history with the Son of God. They are declared of God, to have died with Him. "And if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (Romans vi, 8.) "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii, 3.) "I through law, died unto law, so that I may live unto God. I have been crucified together with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. iii, 19–20.) They are also constantly declared to be *risen* with Christ, and to now stand on the resurrection or heavenly side of His cross and grave. I need not remind the thoughtful reader of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul how frequently such statements occur as "One with Christ," "Dead and risen with Christ," etc. We quote one more: "For the love of

Christ binds us together, because we thus judge that if One died for all, then they all died, and that He died for all, that the living should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died and rose again for them. (II Cor. v, 14–15.)

While God has judicially reckoned the believer as having died with Christ, so that the penalty of sin has been exhausted and He has reconciled him to Himself by Christ's death, He has also brought him into such real vital union with Him, that the believer can be declared to be actually, and not figuratively, One with Christ. "And you being dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made to live together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii, 13.) Quickened together with Him, means to have been made alive by union with a risen Christ. As we have previously seen, this quickening is the impartation of the communicable life of the risen Son of God, which is from henceforth and forever a constituent in the personal being of the believer. He is therefore a child of God by Divine generation. He is a son of God, not by adoption, but by birth. He is born from above, begotten of God, born of God. He is a constituent of the body of The Christ, which is the fullness of Him who filleth all things with all. He is alive in Christ, and Christ lives in him. As born from above, he is now a native of heaven, and as his birthplace is heavenly, so also is his citizenship, his inheritance, and his whole destiny.

We may now begin to understand something about the station in the universe which God has conferred on saved sinners. The successive steps are stated as follows:—

"But God being rich in mercy, on account of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in

sins, hath made us to live together with Christ and exalted us together, and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus in order that He might exhibit in the approaching ages the surpassing wealth of His grace, by His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii, 4–7.) Those concerning whom this was written, had been previously described as being dead in trespasses and sins, under the domination of the Prince of the power of the air, and as being by nature children of wrath. They have been saved by grace through faith, faith which is God's gift. First loved, then forgiven, then made alive, then exalted, and are now seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. These are not poetic fancies or figurative words. They are the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the actual position which a saint in Christ now occupies in the Universe of God. He is "*in Christ Jesus.*" As we have seen that Christ Jesus ascended from the lowest to the highest place, passing through the heavens, and is now exalted above all heavens, so the one who is united to Him, by the possession of His communicable life, is exalted with Him and is viewed of God as seated with Him where He is. As Jesus is exalted above all might and dominion and principality and power and dominion, the believer, according to God's estimate, is there also.

This is not a matter of locality, but, so to speak, describes the believer's status and rank. A prince traveling incognito in a foreign country is still spoken of as being seated upon the throne of his own country. His dignity and dominion are vested rights, which pertain to him wherever he may be, and in whatever circumstances he may be placed. The believer, as one with Christ, as a child of God, by actual generation and birth, is inalienably vested

with the dignities and glories which belong to his birth and station. He is therefore said to be *seated* in the heavenlies in Christ. His position is that of royal dignity and of repose.

At present he may be said to be incognito. While living on the earth, it is said to him, "Beloved, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The multitude of sleeping saints who have departed to be with Christ are also waiting for His manifestation. "Beloved, it is not yet manifested what we shall be, but we know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ, in God. When Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory." (Col. iii, 1–4.)

Such a view of the exalted standing and destiny of the believer in Christ Jesus will seem to many like the wildest dreams of fancy. They are, however, the plain, simple, literal statements of the Word of that God who cannot lie. Our Heavenly Father would have His children know and understand their station, in order that they may behave themselves in accordance therewith. "I beseech you therefore, brethren," the Apostle says, "that ye walk *worthy* of the calling wherewith you are called." (Eph. iv, 1.) In the midst of trial, temptation, toil, penury, perhaps persecution, and insignificant to the eyes of men, the believer is taught that in a little while he is to be taken to heaven, his native place, there to reign with Christ over angels and principalities and powers, and that he is even now vested

with blessing, wealth, and glories, which are beyond all comparison with anything that the earth has to bestow.

We urge that these things should be weighed by the thoughtful reader, as those things which are revealed of God for his most careful consideration. These are the things which are mentioned to the Corinthians by the Apostle Paul, when he tells them that, "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (I Cor. ii, 9.) This statement is almost always supposed to refer to the joys of heaven as yet unrevealed, but the Apostle immediately adds, "but God *hath* revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God." (Ibid. 10.) They are ours now, by actual birth, by Divine deed of gift, and should be ours in faith and anticipation. The present is the testing time of the saint. The object of all this, is that God may reveal Himself through the saints to His universe. He is even now doing this by the manifestation in them, of moral glory through their temptations and sufferings, their endurance, and their present victory. Into these things, angels desire to look. The career therefore of the weakest, meanest, most insignificant and despised child of God, is of more interest to the heavenly host, than the rise and fall of empires. He is working out his own salvation—a salvation which was accomplished for him upon the cross, and which is now being developed in him, by God, who works in him to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

It would not, therefore, appear to be seemly or appropriate for one thus dignified, to be absorbed by worldly desires and objects. It does not seem becoming for one

whom God has endowed with such vast riches, and who has, moreover, the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come, to engage in the scramble for wealth, which characterizes this present evil age. Such an one can safely trust to the over-ruling hand of God the course of earthly politics—since He knows that all things work together for good to them that love God, and that He is surely carrying out His own designs among the nations, to be perfected in His own good time. The believer's citizenship is in the heavens, and as the Greek word would literally express it, his "politics" are there.

In a little while, these exalted ones will be manifested together, as the complete body of The Christ. In due season, the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, will be seen descending out of heaven, from God. Its citizens will be the saints; its dwellings, their spiritual bodies; its light, the glory of God; and its lamp, the Lamb of God, so that the nation shall walk by means of its light.

"AND WHEN THIS CORRUPTIBLE SHALL BE CLOTHED WITH INCORRUPTIBILITY, AND THIS MORTAL SHALL BE CLOTHED WITH IMMORTALITY, THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THE SAYING THAT IS WRITTEN, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY." (I Cor. xv, 54.)

IX.

THE CITY OF GOD.

"For ye are not come to a mountain that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them (for they could not endure that which was commanded. If even a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, and so fearful was the appearance that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake); but ye are come to Zion, a mountain and city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, an entire assembly; and to the church of the first born registered in the heavens; and to a judge, God of all; and to spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than Abel."—Hebrews xii, 18–25.

In the passage before us we have two contrasted sets of facts. One is visible and is a matter of historic record; the other is out of sight, and its manifestation is yet in the future. The one is earthly, the other heavenly.

Mount Sinai had its distinctive character, from the fact that from it the law of God was promulgated. Similarly, throughout the Divine Record, the *mountain* is seen as the place of authority, the dwelling of dominion and sovereignty. When the Lord would legislate for His chosen people, He went up apart into a mountain, "and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught *them*." His attitude was that of regal repose in the midst of His subjects. The place was characteristic of sovereignty. The discourse commonly called, though mistakenly, "The Sermon on the Mount,"

is a code of Divine legislation for the government of those who called Him Lord. He places Himself in direct contrast, and in superiority to Moses, through whom the law was given at Sinai, by the constant repetition of the phrase, "Moses said unto you * * * but I say unto you."

In contrast with the earthly mountain, which might be touched—a place of fear and dread, of darkness and tempest, and the voice of words; and where the sanction of the commandment given was the Divine curse, we are told that we *are now come* to a mountain and a city, which are heavenly; and to an order of things which includes in its scope, a universe, renewed, reconstituted, blest and freed from every taint of evil.

The mountain is Zion, but not the Zion which stands today in the midst of desolated Jerusalem. It is the place of heavenly sovereignty, from which the government of the reconstituted universe is to proceed.

In contrast with the earthly Sinai, it is not the place where the curse is pronounced, but is declared to be the place of blessing. In the prophetic cxxxiii Psalm, it is pictured to us as the place of blessing and of life. The unity of brethren is declared to be similar, or to be in accordance with the dew which fell upon Hermon, and upon the mountains of Zion. For it is said, it is there that "the Lord commanded the blessing, even the life forevermore."

We have here, then, three particulars concerning the mountain of Zion. It is the place of sovereignty, because it was there the command was given. It is the place of blessing, because blessing was the substance of the command. It is the place of life, because the blessing there commanded and bestowed is "life forevermore." This life forever-

more is not the announcement of the unending continuance of created existence, but is a *new* thing, the bringing in of that previously unknown to created intelligences. It is the gift of life, which is essentially eternal, because indestructible, incorruptible, and impeccable, in fact an emanation from God Himself. Those who possess it are declared to be partakers of a Divine nature, and to have been born of God.

The city rests upon the mountain. The mountain, as we have seen, is the emblem of sovereignty. That new order of things, therefore, which is figured to us under the simile of a city, has its foundation in the immutable will of God. "We seek a city which hath foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb. xi, 10.) That which the mountain of Zion represents is God's immutable decree. By this decree, He has laid in this His holy mountain, a *Foundation*. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste." (Isa. xxviii, 16.) Wherefore, also, it is contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." (I Pet. ii, 6.) Now, "other foundation can no man lay than that that *is* laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. iii, 11.) Upon this foundation, laid by Eternal Purpose, rests the whole execution of that Purpose. The Divine universal order of things, typified by the city, rests upon the crucified and risen One, fore-ordained unto this from all eternity. "On which all the building, fitly compacted together, groweth unto an holy habitation for the Lord." (Eph. ii, 22.)

We have now to consider the city. We need, in order to properly do this, to disabuse our minds of the mere ma-

terial ideas which present themselves to us, in connection with this word, and to gather from Scripture the ideas which the Holy Spirit has attached to it. The city is a body corporate. It is also a dwelling-place. It is the seat of authority, of intercourse; and of heavenly pursuits and industries. One great difference between God's thought and man's thought, concerning the city, is that while man's city is an organization, the city of God is an organism. Man's works are all in the way of organization, but God's constructions are all organic. An organization is an assemblage of separate materials, joined together by arrangement, and by artificial cohesion. An organism is that which is built by a life principle within itself; which takes the materials and by virtue of innate power, arranges them according to the law of its being. In one, the cohesion is artificial; in the other, it is a vital union. A table is an organization; a tree is an organism. The unit of a city, is, in the first place, the individual: and in the second, his habitation. In man's city these are brought together, and organized by artificial arrangement. The persons who constitute it are held together by the pressure of external authority, either delegated or assumed. The habitations, also, are laid together, brick by brick, and side by side, by a power external to themselves, and without any relation to each other, except that of propinquity and external resemblance.

The units of the city of God are likewise the individual and the habitation. The individual, however, is the possessor of that life which, as we have just seen, constituted the blessing which the Lord commanded upon Mount Zion—a life which springs from the Risen Christ, as its fountain, and permeates all the members. The body

is, therefore, corporate, not by virtue of agreement or assemblage, but by the possession of a common life, which constitutes all the units one.

The *habitations* of the city of God are also organisms, and not organizations. They are not earthly, but heavenly; not fleshly, but spiritual. You read of them in II Cor. v, where the Apostle Paul writes, "We that are in this tent, do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Also, "If this earthly tent of our dwelling be taken down, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The earthly tent to which the apostle refers is the frail body of humiliation, which is even now undergoing the process of decay, and is soon to be dissolved.

In contrast with this, is the spiritual body, of which we read in I Cor. xv. "There is a psychical body, and there is a spiritual body." A spiritual body is the developed organic expression of the spiritual nature, the life communicated from Jesus Christ. It will be like the glorious body of Christ Himself, and in its appearance, its powers, functions, and glory, will be the fit expression to the universe, of what the grace of God can do, in the salvation and exaltation of a worthless and helpless sinner.

We see, therefore, that the city of God consists of the vital union of the citizens, so that they become, in fact, one body, and that its glorious habitations are not like the organized structures of men, but are the organic manifestation of the life by which they are animated. We can thus see how the Heavenly City, the new Jerusalem, can be de-

scribed as a bride coming down out of heaven, adorned for her husband. If we take as literal, the great cube described in the Apocalypse, with its gates and golden streets, the appellation of "bride" would seem incongruous, but when we consider the organic character, both of its corporate unity, and of what we may call its architecture, we see the beauty and appropriateness of the symbol.

The Mount Zion and the City Zion are thus brought before us, as the centre of a new cosmos, or order of things. To those who are now believers in Jesus Christ, and who wait for the Son of God from heaven, it is said "Ye are come." Not that ye may some time come, or even that ye will certainly come, but as a matter of actual fact, in the sight of God, ye *are* come to Zion, the mountain and the city. That is to say, we have now been actually brought by vital union into relationship with that city, which by and by God will bring out into the sight of His universe, as the expression of His own thought, and by means of which He will manifest His own glory. Our citizenship, therefore, as we read in Phil. iii, is in the heavens. It is not down here. Our relation to the things down here is that of pilgrims and strangers, who look to the heavens for a Saviour, that is to say, a deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our body of humiliation, and make it like unto His own glorious body. Then shall we be manifestly in and of the city; but according to God's estimate, we are now its constituents, its natives and its freemen.

But the city has another title. It is JERUSALEM, the City of the Living God. The name is formed from two Hebrew words, signifying "foundation" and "peace." We know what the earthly Jerusalem was in the days of

Israel's national life, and we know what it will be again, when the Temple of God and the throne of David shall be once more erected within it, and it will be the centre of dominion and of blessing upon the whole earth. But the Heavenly Jerusalem is distinctively the City of the *Living* God. This is His special and appropriate appellation in this place, because it is here that He brings into manifestation that new thing in the universe, the hitherto unrevealed blessing—even life forevermore.

Around this city, as its capital, is gathered the entire universe of God. "Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels, the whole assembly." At present there are wicked principalities and powers in the heavenly host, who, led by Satan, seek to contest for dominion with God, but Satan and all his host shall be destroyed. "Then cometh the end, when the Son shall deliver the Kingdom up to the Father, that God may be all in all." (I Cor. xv.) It is a purified and reconstituted universe which will then be gathered to this centre of government, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the seat of God's throne.

As the myriads of angels are assembled around the City of God, as their centre, so nearer than angel or archangel; and above all principalities and powers are gathered a company, entitled here "the church of the first-born ones." The word "church" means simply a congregation of invited or called out ones. Its members, who were called of God, are those who, during the period between the Lord's ascension and His return, have been quickened into union of life with Him. Scripture intimates that the effects of the death of Christ on the universe are all-inclusive. In the millennial day, and under the personal reign of Christ, great multitudes will be saved, but these are

distinct from the comparatively small company who, during the age which is called in Scripture "the darkness," while Christ is absent, and while Satan reigns as the prince of the world, and the god of the age, have confessed the name of Jesus, and have come out of the era, the chief characteristic of which is "tribulation."

We are also come to a Judge. The literal rendering of this passage makes it read, not that we have come to "God the Judge of all,"—that is a truth of broad and general application—but we are come to a Judge who is God of all. He is the righteous Judge, who has pronounced us righteous in His Son. Our eternal security rests in the fact that we have been brought into Him, and stand blameless in His presence.

In this reconstituted universe we find another order of beings, distinct alike from angels, and from the first-born ones, namely, the "spirits of just men made perfect," or "having been perfected." We read of some of these by name, in the 12th of Hebrews. Concerning ourselves it is said that we *have* received the promises. We did receive them in their fullness, when God bestowed upon us the gift of eternal life, which includes all promise and all blessing. This gift, however, could not be bestowed till Christ had made an end of sins, and had risen from the dead. Before that time a long list of God's chosen ones had confessed His name, and had believed the testimony concerning the Messiah that was to appear. It was said of them that they were attested through the faith. They did not receive the promises. "All these died in faith, not having received the promised blessings, but having seen and saluted them afar off, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. xi, 13.)

They died, but since Jesus died and rose again no saint has died; according to His word, "He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." (John xi, 26.) These ancient saints were all their life long in bondage, through fear of death. (Heb. ii, 15.) They went down into darkness and silence, the place from which Samuel was called for a moment, that he might testify to Saul. They waited there in unconsciousness for their Deliverer. When the Lord Jesus died He descended into the heart of the earth, and brought up, as we read in Ephesians iv, a great multitude of captives. Concerning these, we are told that without us they might not be perfected. (Heb. xi, 40) We see them here, however, as having been perfected and occupying their own place in the new universe.

But we are brought nigh, not merely to a city, a throne, and a Judge. We find there the One in whose blood we have been justified, by whose death we have been reconciled, and in whose life we are saved. This is Jesus, our Friend, our Saviour, the one whose name has brought comfort and gladness to our hearts in the times when we have been oppressed with consciousness of sins, and with the pressure of trial. It is Jesus here revealed in His special capacity of the Mediator of the new covenant.

This new covenant is repeatedly referred to in the epistle before us, in contrast with an old covenant which has only proved man's failure, and which has been displaced by the new. The essence of the former convenant was, "This do, and thou shalt live." The essence of the second is, "The gift of God is eternal life." (Rom. v, 23.) In the one, life was to be *earned* by obedience to law. In the other life is *given*—a new life, which is in accordance and harmony with God's character, and consequently, with

His law. A striking reference to this covenant occurs in the 9th chapter, 16th to 18th verses of this Epistle. Translated according to the context these verses may be read as follows: "For where there is a covenant it is necessary to produce the death of that which ratifies it, for a covenant is firm over dead victims, since it is never valid when that which ratifies it is alive. Hence, not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood." There is no reference here to a last will and testament, or the bequeathing of an inheritance, but the allusion is to the ancient manner of ratifying an agreement. A victim was slain, divided into pieces, and each party to the covenant passed between the pieces, reciting its terms and invoking upon his own head the fate of the victim in the event of his non-fulfillment. This was exemplified in the covenant which God made with Abraham. When Abraham had been thrown into a deep sleep he saw in a vision slain and divided victims arranged in pieces upon the ground, and the shekinal glory, or manifest appearance of God, being the same that was manifested in the pillar of fire, and over the mercy seat, passed between these pieces. See the account in Gen. xv. Abraham was passive, because in this covenant there was no reciprocity, no consideration promised or given on his part. It was a one-sided covenant, God being the sole promiser and performer. Hence *He only* passed between these pieces. So in like manner Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant, by which His chosen ones receive everything and give nothing. He is Himself the Victim, His blood is the blood of the new covenant, and He is the Mediator, that is to say, the One who has effected and carried out this covenant, as between God and man. God declares over the slain Victim the eternal security of

the believer. The blood seals the covenant, and the Living Mediator carries it to final and complete execution.

That which follows is the testimony to that supreme action upon which the pillars of God's government now rest. It is that which not only brings peace to the sinner's heart, but by reason of which the universe coheres. We are told, in the Epistle to the Colossians, that having made peace by the blood of His cross, God by means of Him, shall reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on the earth or things in the heavens. This is the "blood of sprinkling"—not, as many suppose, called thus because it is sprinkled upon the sinner to cleanse away his sin, but because being sprinkled in the holiest of all, upon the mercy seat, and kept eternally in the sight of Infinite Justice, it testifies that sins have been made an end of forever. The blood vindicates and justifies those who are in Christ Jesus. It condemns and sentences those who remain enemies to Him, and the culmination of the condemnation and of the sentence is the destruction of soul and body, the utter blotting out of existence both the sinner and his sin. The blood of Abel cried from the ground. The blood of sprinkling speaks to us from the Holy Place in Heaven. The blood of Abel demanded Justice. The blood of sprinkling proclaims mercy. The blood of Abel demanded life for life. The blood of sprinkling proclaims life freely given to those who are dead in trespasses and in sins.

It would be blessed if every Christian could see and understand the place and the relations to which he has been brought, though not there in body, nor according to sight. He is there according to God's estimate, and will surely come into realized presence there, in a little while. He

has been made a citizen of a new and heavenly city, an order of things distinct from and in contrast with that which is upon the earth. This city has its foundation in the immutable will of God, who has laid in Zion His corner-stone. Within the city is seen God, the Judge of all. Around the city, as the centre of all government, are gathered the myriads of God's intelligent beings. Upon the throne in the midst of the city there is the Lamb, as it had been slain—the Mediator of the new covenant. In immediate nearness to Him is seen the Church of the first-born ones, and perfected together with them the great company of the ancient saints who waited for the Messiah, but who died without the sight; and over all, through all, in all, is the effect of the "blood of sprinkling," the blood of the new covenant in which God has reconciled all things to Himself, in which God is all in all in the kingdom delivered up to Him by the Son, and in which all things, both in the heavens and upon the earth, are "reunited under One Head, even in the Christ." (Eph. i, 10.)

"FOR THE LORD HATH CHOSEN ZION; HE HATH DESIRED IT FOR HIS HABITATION. THIS IS MY REST FOREVER; HERE WILL I DWELL." (Ps. cxxxii, 13, 14.)

X.

WALKING WITH GOD.

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have communion one with another, and the blood of His Son Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."—I *John* i, 7.

The proper and practical effect of the doctrine of "Life in Christ Only," which we have tried to unfold from Scripture in the preceding tracts, is summarized in the above title.

It is recorded of one of old—"And Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him." Enoch was the eighth in descent from Adam. The gamut of human evil had been sounded in the seven previous generations in the line of Cain. God's plan of mercy had also been developed in the seven generations in the line of Seth. In the one we see foreshadowed all the material progress and culture which have done so much to make the world comfortable for man to live in. This is what the Apostle Jude mentions, as the "way of Cain." In the other, the names of Seth and his descendants tell to us the way of God in dealing with sinners. In music, the complete scale is made up of seven notes. But the ear is not satisfied with the seventh—it waits for another, which is the beginning of a new series. The same law pertains to Light, and rules in the organization of the material universe. The

law of sevens also runs through Scripture, and is one of the distinctive marks which show the common authorship of the Word and the Works of God.

Enoch therefore stands before us in type, as representing a new order of things. The first special characteristic mentioned concerning him is that he "walked with God." This meant his separation from an evil world to intimate association with his Creator. In the next place, "he was not, for God took him." As we are told in another place "he was translated, that he should not see death." In all these particulars, he typifies the Body of Christ, viz.: the Church of which Christ is the Head and Life. This, as we are told in II Corinthians v, is "a New Creation." Its Head is the "First Born from the dead," and it is called the "Church of the First Born Ones." It is the beginning of a new order of things, which is to result in the "reheading up of the entire universe in the Christ." It has been brought into the place of exaltation, so that its special privilege is to walk with God. It has also, like Enoch, been translated from "the kingdom of the darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i, 13); and the Lord Jesus Himself has told its members that they shall never either see or taste of death. In a little while, secretly and suddenly, it will be caught up out of the world to meet the Lord in the air, thus completing the resemblance to Enoch, who "was not, for God took him."

The believer in Jesus has been endowed with competency to walk with God by being made partaker of a divine Nature—the new life communicated from the risen Son of God; and he has, by virtue of this new life, the ability to know God. That is to say, he has a spiritual intelligence which enables him to apprehend God and that

which God reveals. His eyes are open to comprehend the light, and his ears to hear the voice of the Son of God.

This walk with God is spoken of by the Apostle John as "walking in the light." This Light is the theme of the gospel of John. Of the Incarnate Word it is declared that "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The life and the light are therefore identical. The radiance of the light is the shining out of the life. As Jesus was the Light which came into the world, so the partakers of His Life are light-bearers. There is therefore community between the Lord Jesus and His saints, not only of life, but of the effects of life. To walk as He walked, to speak and to act like Him, to let His life in us shine out in our acts and ways, is walking with God. This, as we have already said, is the present object of our salvation. It is not merely from pity that God has saved us from our guilt and ruin, but in order that He might exemplify through those who are utterly weak in themselves, the power of that new vital principle which was brought to light in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is still further enforced and illustrated in the first Epistle of John. We are taught in the first chapter of this Epistle concerning "*Communion*." The word translated sometimes "fellowship" and sometimes "communion" means "common possession or partnership." After first announcing the Life which his eyes had seen, and his hands had handled, the Apostle says that the object of his message is that the reader may have the same possession—that is to say, this knowledge, in common with himself, of the new Eternal Life. Unfolding further this communion, he declares that he possesses it in common with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. There is therefore, as an

actual fact, a glorious community of possession, of interest, and of hope, between the Father, the Son, and the believer. This, however, is not always *realized* by the latter. The object of the Apostle's message is that the common possession into which God has introduced the believer shall be consciously realized in his experience. How this may be accomplished is told in the words with which we have headed this essay, "That if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship (communion) one with another, and the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, cleanseth us from all sin."

To walk with God at all, it is absolutely necessary that there should be absolute freedom from every stain of sin or defilement. This must be perfect. Any stain remaining would be a hindrance to communion with God. The necessary cleansing, we are told, is accomplished by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. This does not refer to the redemption in which the believer stands complete before God, but is something which is constantly going on while he is walking in the Light. In other words, while the Christian is living in the power of this communion, realized by faith only, he is just so constantly being cleansed from every stain. He is not told that he will not contract defilement. On the contrary, it is said that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" but the remedy is instant and immediate—namely, that if we confess our sins, He is faithful (to His promise) and just (to His own Son) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This walking in the light is too commonly regarded as a matter of attainment. It is commonly thought that it is an experience reserved for those who by long conflict have

subdued the flesh, and are walking in a state that is called "self-consecration;" but in truth, it is God's provision to meet the weakest believer just where he is. God first brings the sinner to the light and endows him with ability to walk in it. It is not necessary to attain in order to walk, but we walk in order that we may attain. The principle of communion with God, is that God gives everything, and the believer receives everything, responding to God only in that which he has received. There are degrees of attainment in the realized experience of this communion, but in itself considered, it is as much the privilege of the weakest saint as of the strongest. God, first of all, comes to the poor sinner revealing Himself to him. He then, as it were, takes him by the hand, and leads him step by step into the knowledge of what He is in Himself and of what He has made the believer to be in His Son.

The realized *experience* of this can only be individual with each Christian. It is confidential between God and himself. To the man who is thus walking, there is a consciousness of secret, holy, blissful, unshadowed intercourse with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. The defiling stain that comes from contact with the world is instantly perceived by the Light in which he walks, and is as instantly effaced by the cleansing power of the blood.

In the exercise of this confidence a servant of Jesus Christ is able to go on conquering and to conquer. In the place where he is walking there is perfect calm, even "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." The tumult and trouble of the world may rage about him, but his rest is in God, where nothing can reach it. What God thinks about his way of life is of the greatest possible consequence to him, but what man may judge concerning him,

is a very slight matter. He is able even to endure with patience the failures of his brethren, or even their mistaken judgments concerning himself. He does not need and will not seek for vindication, since God is his vindicator, and it is enough for him at all times and under all circumstances that "Jesus knows." He will also not be occupied with appearances nor seeking for present results for his service. He knows that even his Saviour has not yet seen the travail of His soul and been satisfied. In a word, he does not measure his success as a servant by the apparent results of his service, but by the approval of Jesus Christ.

It is a walk of faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight." It begins with the first exercise of trust in Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. When the sinner has for the first time looked away from himself and his sins, and has seen in the One who died for sinners the answer to sin, he has *come* to the Light. The Light shows him his sin, greater and blacker than he had ever dreamed, but it also reveals to him the precious blood which has made an end of it forever. He can therefore be at rest and be satisfied. But he is not the only one who is resting in the same place. God also rests with entire satisfaction in the finished work of His own Son, on the sinner's behalf. This is the *Communion* of which John speaks. God and the saved sinner are both at rest in what the Son has accomplished. They have the same thoughts about the same thing.

We are also taught, however, "As ye have *received* Christ Jesus the Lord, *walk* ye in Him." We received Him in the way of simple faith, upon the unsupported testimony of the Word of God. To *walk* in Him, is but the constant repetition of this act. In receiving Him, we

took everything and gave nothing. In walking in Him we are therefore to be occupied with Him as the Giver, in the exercise of that same faith by which we first believed. God has made it all very simple in His Word, and the more simply we receive it, the more fully shall we be blessed. The same principle reaches everything in our lives. Though walking in the Light of Life, and to a greater or less extent light-bearers ourselves, we are nevertheless walking through the night, and in the midst of the same darkness into which the Light came, and which comprehended it not. In receiving Christ, we believed God's testimony. In walking in Him, we are to trust the same testimony—a testimony which is adapted to meet our needs under all circumstances. His testimony, indeed, takes the place of circumstances, so that we are to walk as seeing that which is invisible. We are to seek to have God's thoughts about everything. This is a place of absolute dependence, yet of entire rest. Now, as already said, this is the place to which grace has already brought us. We could never have reached it ourselves, and it is therefore not a question of attainment. Every Christian is brought there when he first trusts his soul to Jesus Christ. But to *abide* in it—to *live* in it—to *walk* in it—these are matters of daily personal experience, which lead to attainment in the knowledge of "Communion with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

But walking together implies community of thought, of feeling and of interest. All these, according to God, are centred in Christ Jesus. The walk is "in Christ Jesus." The believer is already "in Christ Jesus." Reckoned of God as having once died with Christ, he is now risen with Him by the impartation of that deathless principle of being

which Jesus brought to light when God raised Him from the dead. Death has separated Him from the world—Life unites him to Jesus Christ. As he seeks to live in harmony with these eternal facts of his existence, just so far is he walking with God.

The Apostle Paul expresses it all in these words, written to the Galatians:

"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, NEVERTHELESS I LIVE; YET NO LONGER I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME; AND THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH, I LIVE IN THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME." (Gal. ii, 20.)